

## **November 5 Weekly Legislative Update**

### **US Army Corps of Engineers releases Draft Coastal Study Tentatively Selected Plan**

Today, the US Army Corps of Engineers-Galveston released the Coastal Texas Study Tentatively Selected Plan for a storm surge suppression system. The following links take you to the [Executive Summary, Draft Report, and Appendices](#). Coastal Texas Study StoryMaps can be accessed here - <https://coastal-texas-hub-usace-swg.hub.arcgis.com/>

***Public comments will be due by December 14, 2020.*** The public can submit written comments or sign up for an upcoming virtual public meeting below:

1. **November 16, 11 AM – 1 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=ebdba0e813edc9f3c9002591aa86aea60>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 678 5886#
2. **November 16, 6 – 8 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=e52bd63e74062417b8d0b655c2997a5f9>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 334 8610#
3. **December 3, 11 AM – 1 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=e497520a2300d742c31641eed000991d1>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 260 6311#
4. **December 3, 6 – 8 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=ecc8828665924de2bba88b7bf3edac5d3>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 196 7905#
5. **December 8, 11 AM – 1 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=ea94dc5a0910ce1b80ff4c636467e2cbc>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 880 5839#
6. **December 8, 6 – 8 PM:**  
<https://hollowayecs.webex.com/hollowayecs/onstage/g.php?MTID=eab06d3b96210ffb07f64cf375dfbfc1e>  
Join by phone: +1-408-418-9388 / Access code - 132 465 2914#

## **Austin Update**

### **State Rep. Dade Phelan Has “Super Majority” Votes to be House Speaker**

With the support of over 100 members, Texas House State Affairs Committee Chairman Representative Dade Phelan (Beaumont-R) will likely become the next Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. The first order of business will be voting for the Speaker when the 150-member body convenes for the 87 Legislative Session on January 12, 2021. As of Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Phelan had gained endorsements from 57 Republicans and 49 Democrats. Representatives Mayes Middleton and Greg Bonnen MD are included as supporters of Rep. Phelan's candidacy for Speaker. With Chairman Phelan representing Beaumont (Orange County and portion of Jefferson County) in the role, the Speaker's Office will continue to be represented by a member from a coastal community. Such representation is considered an added benefit when issues related to TWIA, flood mitigation, and disaster recovery are considered. The City of Galveston successfully negotiated with Chairman Phelan on provisions in bills that would fairly accommodate the City's tree ordinance (2017) and building standards unique to historic preservation, flood insurance, and windstorm requirements (2019).

### **Governor's Broadband Development Council Issues First Report To Texas Legislature**

The Governor's Broadband Development Council (GBDC) has [issued its first report to the Texas Legislature](#). The report provides recommendations to the 87th Legislature and an overview of the work of GBDC since its inception. GBDC researched the progress of broadband development in unserved areas, identified barriers to residential and commercial broadband deployment in unserved areas, studied technology-neutral solutions to overcome barriers, and analyzed how statewide access to broadband would benefit economic development, higher education, public education, state and local law enforcement, state emergency preparedness, and health care services. Resulting from this research, GBDC recommends that the Texas Legislature create a state broadband plan and establish a broadband office. The Council also recommends the continued study of the development of a state broadband funding program to incentivize deployment in unserved areas. The [Governor's Broadband Development Council \(GBDC\)](#) was established in 2019 by the 86th Legislative Session in order to study and identify ways to provide internet access to unserved areas of Texas.

### **Texans for the Arts Hosting Hotel Occupancy Tax Webinar on November 10th**

Texans for the Arts, a statewide arts advocacy association, recently launched its [Municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax \(HOT\) Toolkit](#). The HOT Toolkit serves as an online resource for arts, municipal, hotel, and tourism leaders regarding the use of HOT revenue to promote the arts in cities across Texas. Texans for the Arts Foundation is hosting a free webinar on the HOT Toolkit on Tuesday, November 10 from 1:00-2:30 PM CST. Interested city officials and employees are invited to join. More information on the webinar, including a link to register, can be found [here](#).

### **FEMA Implements New Policy as Part of Disaster Reform Recovery Act**

FEMA announced the release of a policy to provide communities with resources to enforce building codes and floodplain management following a major disaster declaration. The ["Building Code and Floodplain Management Administration and Enforcement" policy](#) can provide funding for the first 180 days following a major declaration for

- costs associated with extra hires or contracted support,
- reviewing and processing building permits and occupancy and compliance certificates,

- conducting building inspections and initial substantial damage field surveys,
- reviewing disaster-related development in the floodplain, or
- providing educational services to the public on floodplain requirements.

The policy is a result of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, Section 1206. This policy applies to all major disaster declarations declared on or after August 1, 2017.

### **Flood Information Clearinghouse Website**

The Texas Water Development Board, the General Land Office, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management have created a clearinghouse of information about state and federal flood planning, mitigation, and control programs that may serve as a source of funding for flood projects. The site includes an online [Request for Information Form](#) that entities can submit to get feedback on state and federal financial assistance that could best fit their flood mitigation needs. It also includes information on current funding opportunities, general project and entity eligibility by program, upcoming events related to flood mitigation financial assistance, and other resources. For more information, visit <https://texasfloodclearinghouse.org/index.html>.

### **TX House Ways and Means Committee Requests Information on Interim Charge – Comments Due November 13, 2020**

1. **Interim Charge 1.1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:  
S.B. 2, which is the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019. Monitor the implementation of the legislation, including a review of the tax rates adopted by taxing units in 2019 and 2020, the appraisal review board survey system, and progress in onboarding the tax rate notices and websites. Make recommendations for modifications as necessary and appropriate.

### **Washington Update**

US Senate will return to Washington next week to begin a “lame duck” session for the remainder of 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. The House will return the following week. Senate Majority Leader has announced COVID-19 stimulus legislation will be the number one priority and he has indicated additional funding for state and local governments may be a “possibility.” Second priority will be the omnibus appropriations legislation necessary to keep the federal government running past December 11<sup>th</sup> when a temporary funding continuing resolution is set to expire. House and Senate leadership will need to negotiate a full budget in order to pass a final omnibus appropriations bill and such an agreement will need approval of the President in order to fully fund the government until the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2021.

### **DOJ Releases Standards for Policing Certification**

On Wednesday the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) [announced](#) Standards for Certification that will be used by credentialing bodies to begin certifying law enforcement agencies over the next

three months. The standards are a result of the President's June [Executive Order](#), Safe Policing for Safe Communities, which requires all state, local, and university law enforcement agencies be certified by independent credentialing agencies. Additional information on the credentialing action, including a [fact sheet](#) and [principles](#) document, can be found [here](#).

## **Reports of Interest**

[ESG Investing and Public Pensions: An Update](#)

Center for Retirement Research at Boston College

[Shortened Census Led to an Incomplete Count in Some Areas](#)

Pew Trusts.org - 11/4/2020